

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 157293
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APPROVED BY ARA:TATODMAN

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TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T STATE 157293

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FOR AMBASSADOR OR PRINCIPAL OFFICER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, GT, BH, UK

SUBJECT: GUATEMALA-BELIZE DISPUTE

REFS: (A) GUATEMALA 4191 (B) STATE 156404

1. FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS OF SECRETARY'S SEPARATE MEETINGS AFTERNOON JULY 6 WITH GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA AND BRITISH MINISTER OF STATE ROWLANDS; UNDER SECRETARY HABIB, ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN WERE ALSO PRESENT.

2. BY PRE-ARRANGEMENT BOTH SIDES TABLED PROPOSALS MORNING JULY 6, BUT DID NOT DISCUSS THEM. MOLINA TABLED TERRITORIAL CESSION PROPOSAL WITH SOUTHERN BOUNDARY BELIZE AT MONKEY RIVER AND CHIGUIBU RIVER, WITH SEAWARD EXTENSION JUST SOUTH OF CAYO POMPION. HE ALSO FILED PROTEST AT PRESENCE BRITISH FRIGATE OFF BELIZE.

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3. BRITISH PROPOSED SEA BOUNDARIES ADJUSTMENT TO GUARANTEE GUATEMALA ADEQUATE ACCESS TO PUERTO BARRIOS AND UNSPECIFIED QUOTE SUBSTANTIAL UNQUOTE FINANCING FOR MAJOR GUATEMALAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OR PROJECTS.

4. IN RESPONSE TO SECRETARY'S QUERY RE POSITION ON GROUND,

MOLINA SAID THINGS WERE VERY TENSE AS RESULT BRITISH

SENDING IN FRIGATE AND QUOTE EXTRA TROOPS UNQUOTE. HE ADDED THAT THINGS WERE SLIPPING BEYOND HIS CONTROL. THE MATTER HAS STOPPED BEING PRIMARILY WITH THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND IS NOW WITH THE ARMY. GUATEMALAN AMBASSADOR INTERJECTED THAT ARMY WAS UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO JUSTIFY ITS EXISTENCE. IF IT DOES NOT INTERVENE IN THE ABSENCE OF AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION, THERE MAY BE A COUP. MOLINA NOTED LATER, HOWEVER, THAT HE STILL WOULD HAVE CONTROL OVER DEVELOPMENTS IF TOMORROW'S MEETING HAS GOOD RESULTS.

5. BOTH MOLINA AND ROWLANDS INDICATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MEETING WOULD BE MADE AT PRIVATE TALKS, PARTICULARLY BETWEEN MOLINA AND ROWLANDS.

6. MOLINA INSISTED TO SECRETARY THAT MONKEY RIVER WAS MINIMUM TERRITORIAL CESSION GUATEMALA COULD ACCEPT, AND EXPLAINED HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND HOW THIS REPRESENTED CONSIDERABLE WITHDRAWAL FROM EARLIER POSITION. HE SAID TERRITORY AND SECURE OUTLET TO SEA WERE THE TWO ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR GUATEMALA. THOUGH SOME MINOR ADJUSTMENT IN THE LANDWARD LINE WAS POSSIBLE, THE SEAWARD TERMINAL MUST BE AT THE MONKEY RIVER. THIS MUCH IS ESSENTIAL TO OBTAIN MINIMUM SUPPORT TO CHANGE CONSTITUTION. HE ADDED THAT WITH MONKEY RIVER LINE GUATEMALA WOULD FULLY
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ACCEPT BELIZE INDEPENDENCE; IN FACT, WOULD EVEN GUARANTEE IT. BRITISH TERRITORIAL SEA ADJUSTMENT PROPOSAL WAS INSIGNIFICANT, AND ASSUMED BELIZEAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER KEYS, WHICH GUATEMALA DOES NOT ACCEPT.

7. HABIB TOLD MOLINA BRITISH SIMPLY DO NOT FEEL THEY CAN GO AS FAR AS THE MONKEY RIVER, BUT WILLING CONSIDER LESS TERRITORY AND THROW IN ASSISTANCE, WHICH THEY WOULD CALL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND GUATEMALA COULD PERHAPS CALL COMPENSATION, IF IT NEEDED TO. EVEN IF AGREEMENT IMPOSSIBLE THIS ROUND, ANOTHER ROUND SHOULD BE SCHEDULED, EITHER AT TIME OF UNGA OR BEFORE. MOLINA AGREED TO TAKE BACK ANY SPECIFIC BRITISH TERRITORIAL OFFER LESS THAN THE MONKEY RIVER TO HIS GOVERNMENT, BUT NOTED THAT NONE HAD THUS FAR BEEN FORTHCOMING.

8. SECRETARY CONCLUDED WITH MOLINA BY SAYING HE SHOULD FEEL FREE TO CALL TOMORROW OR ANY TIME IF NECESSARY, AND MOLINA NOTED HE IS WILLING TO STAY IN WASHINGTON AS LONG AS NECESSARY TO REACH A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION.

9. AT MEETING WITH ROWLANDS, SECRETARY SUMMARIZED

CONVERSATION WITH MOLINA. HE NOTED THAT HE FELT MOLINA WOULD TAKE BACK LESS THAN THE MONKEY RIVER, BUT THAT HE MUST HAVE A SPECIFIC PACKAGE INCLUDING A TERRITORIAL CESSION PROPOSAL FROM BRITISH.

10. ROWLANDS SAID HE MUST SAY HE HAD NO AUTHORITY TO FORMALLY TABLE A TERRITORIAL PROPOSAL, BUT HE IS PREPARED TO TELL MOLINA UK IS WILLING TO LOOK AT MOHO RIVER LINE IF MOLINA PREPARED TO CARRY THAT BACK TO GOG. HE ALSO EXPLAINED ASSISTANCE PACKAGE AS BEING JOINT UK DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR BELIZE AND ADJACENT GUATEMALAN DEPARTMENTS PLUS SOME CONTRIBUTION TO MAJOR GUATEMALAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, SUCH AS PIPELINE. ROWLANDS UNWILLING TO SPECIFY AMOUNT, BUT MENTIONED 7 MILLION POUNDS IN CONTEXT OF JOINT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.

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11. ROWLANDS SAID HE INTENDS TO INFORM MOLINA EARLY AFTERNOON JULY 7 THAT BRITISH RETURNING HARRIER JETS TO GUATEMALA THAT AFTERNOON, AND EXPRESSED HIS DILEMMA AS TO HOW TO KEEP THIS FROM BLOWING UP THE NEGOTIATION. HE WOULD NATURALLY EMPHASIZE BRITISH MILITARY MOVES SOLELY FOR DEFENSE OF BELIZE AND IN REACTION TO GUATEMALAN RESERVE CALL-UP, MILITARY BUILD-UP AND BELLIGERENT STATEMENTS.

12. SECRETARY AND ROWLANDS AGREED THE GUATEMALANS WANT TO KEEP THE NEGOTIATIONS GOING, AND THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO DIVORCE THE BRITISH REINFORCEMENT FROM THE TALKS. ROWLANDS SUGGESTED A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER TO LAUGURUD TO COINCIDE WITH ROWLANDS' MESSAGE TO MOLINA. THE SECRETARY AGREED THIS WOULD BE SENSIBLE.

13. ROWLANDS RAISED POSSIBILITY THAT HE IMPLY TO MOLINA THAT BRITISH MIGHT ACCEPT WITHDRAWAL OF HARRIERS AND FRIGATE AS PRECONDITION FOR NEXT ROUND OF TALKS OR IN CONTEXT OF NEXT ROUND. SPECIAL MISSION BY ROWLANDS TO GUATEMALA TO SET UP SUCH CONDITIONS AND NEXT ROUND WAS ALSO DISCUSSED FAVORABLY.

14. THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT THERE IS DANGE OF MIS-CALCULATION AND OVERREACTION IN TENSE SITUATION, PARTICULARLY AFTER HARRIERS ARRIVE. ROWLANDS WONDERED WHETHER OAS OBSERVERS MIGHT BE USEFUL AND BELIEVED PRICE WOULD ACCEPT THAT. SECRETARY BELIEVED, IN ABSENCE OF HOSTILITIES, OTHER OPTIONS SHOULD BE TRIED FIRST, INCLUDING AGREEMENT TO MEDIATE. VENEZUELA WAS MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE MEDIATOR. OAS PEACEKEEPING INVOLVEMENT WAS SUPPORTED IF HOSTILITIES BREAK OUT OR AS LAST RESORT IF TALKS STALLED OR OTHER

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MEDIATION UNSUCCESSFUL.

15. SECRETARY RESPONDED TO ROWLANDS' REQUEST THAT WE COUNSEL THE GUATEMALANS ON MODERATION BY NOTING THAT THE BRITISH HARRIER DECISION WILL BADLY DAMAGE OUR CREDIBILITY. ROWLANDS PROMISED TO BE IN TOUCH WITH SECRETARY TOMORROW (JULY 7).

16. FYI. ROWLANDS MENTIONED THE HARRIERS BEING FERRIED THROUGH CANADA RATHER THAN BERMUDA. HERCULES AND DC-10'S CARRYING SUPPORT PERSONNEL WILL TRANSIT BERMUDA. END FYI. VANCE

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TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

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FOR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING SECSTATE 157293 SENT ACTION GUATEMALA INFO LONDON
BELIZE JULY 7, 1977 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 157293

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FOR AMBASSADOR OR PRINCIPAL OFFICER

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